

# City Council to vote on anti-HB 2 resolution

BY TODD LUCK  
THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem City Council will be voting on a resolution in protest of HB2 in its Monday, April 18 meeting.

The resolution, discussed in the last full council meeting, went before the general government committee on Tuesday, April 12, just hours after Governor Pat McCrory signed an executive order "clarifying" HB 2. The controversial law was passed in a one-day General Assembly session to prevent Charlotte from enacting a nondiscrimination ordinance for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals that included allowing transgender individuals to use the restroom or locker room of the gender they identify with. To do that, the law restricts local governments from going further than state law in discrimination protections and says individuals can only use public restrooms that match the gender on their birth certificate.

"It's scapegoating a relatively small and particularly vulnerable minority, in this case transgender individuals, playing on fears that folks have, good folks have, of the unknown," said the resolution's author, City Council member Dan Besse, about HB 2.

The Committee voted unanimously to send the resolution to full council on Monday. The resolution voices concern about the law and asks local lawmakers to undo its "damaging legislative changes."

Neither City Council

members nor the speakers at the meeting were impressed with McCrory's order which added sexual orientation and gender

include gender identity and sexual orientation, so federal law would say a transgender employee should be able to use the restroom

that it may put women or children in danger of sexual assault. Proponents of the ordinance have rejected that as a scare tactic and point to the more than 200 cities around the country that have similar ordinances.

Other speakers did think it was a civil rights issue, like Christina Novaton, whose partner is transgender.

"I think discrimination is more than race and gender," she said.

City Council Member D.D. Adams agreed it's a civil rights issue and plans to be in Raleigh for it when the General Assembly reconvenes on April 25. City Council Member Derwin Montgomery urged people to approach the issue with understanding and tolerance.

"The fact of the matter is, for a long time in this country, people were not comfortable eating in the same restaurant with people who didn't look like them," said Montgomery. "... today this is a much different community and a much different place."

Robert Clark was the only City Council member who was sympathetic to the bill. He said he was concerned Charlotte's ordinance would've created discomfort in locker rooms.

"A lot of people say it's bigger than the bathroom issue," said Clark. "To me, it's not."

Clark, however, said he also had concerns about the potential conflict between state and federal discrimination laws it may put local governments in.

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**-Liam Hooper, board member of North Star LGBT Community Center**

identity to discrimination policies for State employees and urged lawmakers to change part of the law that prevents employees from suing for discrimination.

"So we add sexual orientation and gender identity to the description, but we still do not have legal recourse," said Liam Hooper, a transgender man and board member of North Star LGBT Community Center, who spoke during the comment session.

City Attorney Angela Carmon told the council the law had two main effects on City operations: employees lose their ability to sue for discrimination, and it creates a problem if there's a conflict between federal and state discrimination laws. She gave the example that the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) interprets "sex" to

they identify with, while HB2 says otherwise.

Carmon said that the law doesn't prevent the City from having its own standards for minority contractor participation during contract bidding, but language expressing concern about that was kept in the resolution because Besse said that one legal expert they consulted said the issue was unclear.

Rev. Laura Spangler of Lloyd Presbyterian Church was the sole speaker who found "wisdom and common sense" in HB 2.

"I am the pastor of a civil rights church," said Spangler. "It is not discrimination, it is not a civil rights issue, we are trying to change the way we are created."

She said the law "ensured the protection of our children and youth." Opponents of the Charlotte ordinance raised concerns



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